

EMBARGOED UNTIL 5 PM PT - WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2019

AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

Good evening.

Thank you to friends and family ... colleagues and members of the City Council ... fellow elected officials ... community and neighborhood council leaders ... the students and faculty of this great high school...

Friends, we've come together, as we do each spring, to take stock of where we are in Los Angeles — to reflect on the state of our city ... and to peer forward into our future.

By almost all measures, we are living in extraordinary times — times in which we face new and fast-growing challenges: to our climate ... our Constitution ... even our consensus around fundamental truths that have bound us together.

As tough as these challenges may feel, our nation's inaction in addressing them feels even worse. At a moment defined by both great potential and by threats to our families and futures — Washington remains paralyzed by partisanship ... by prejudice ... and by pettiness.

But here in L.A., we take a different approach. Here in L.A., we see the problems in front of us ... and we act on the opportunities that surround us.

We don't overlook tents and potholes ... we don't disregard growing class sizes and rising temperatures ... we do not ignore inequality.

There are so many amazing things that define us as Angelenos — our openness ... our innovative spirit ... our relentless pursuit of justice and equality. But the most powerful thread that runs through L.A.'s history is the way we take on tough challenges. Our fearlessness.

That is our story... and one that we share with this very campus.

Fifty-one years ago, at the height of the civil rights movement, students here at Lincoln High School sparked a movement by walking out of their classrooms. With their peers from across East L.A., they protested failing schools, low expectations, unequal conditions, racist teachers — an education system that was supposed to work for them, but that too often worked against them.

They were kids with courage, and they were joined by 22,000 Angelenos who took part in the walkouts, who said that only through a quality education could this city, and this country, act on the promise of a better tomorrow.

In standing up and speaking out, these students — many of them immigrants and children of immigrants — wrote a heroic new chapter of American history.

This year, a half-century later, Angelenos were on the streets once more — parents, students, and community members walking side-by-side with teachers, to stand up for the idea that an excellent education is the birthright of every child in America.

Tens of thousands of people walking picket lines in the pouring rain … and as I convened parties at City Hall to help settle a strike, I saw an opening for something much greater than just a teachers' contract. I realized this was a moment for us to unite around a new social contract to enshrine L.A. as a city of opportunity for everyone.

Because Los Angeles never lets a crisis go to waste. After the Northridge earthquake, we remembered the lives lost, rebuilt our city and emerged even more resilient. After Watts and Rodney King — in the face of soaring crime — we rethought and reformed public safety. After the Great Recession, we went back to the basics and made City Hall and our economy work once again … and in the past five years, Los Angeles has outpaced New York, Chicago, and our country as a whole in economic and income growth.

That ability to turn adversity into progress embodies the best of who we are. We saw that on the streets during our teachers strike … and let me tell you: it was just as powerful behind-the-scenes.

Years of frustrations and division had left wounds and wide gaps between the district and the teachers union. The mistrust ran deep.

Despite that history, for five days and all night into a sixth, everyone stayed committed and at the table. I watched as advocates became leaders … and sides became a coalition. And what began as a tense negotiation evolved into a real plan for how we'd work together to put our kids, and their futures, first.

Many years after I leave City Hall, I will remember a night during those negotiations when the bargaining teams and I went to the top of that building to watch a rare lunar eclipse.

I couldn't help but think about history that night … staring out at the city from a tower named for Tom Bradley, the last mayor to confront a teachers strike in this town.

I thought about what he did on a night like that some 30 years ago.

And I thought about everyone who came before us in L.A.: those who dared bring water to a parched pueblo … those who stood unbowed through a Great Depression … those who built factories that helped win a World War … and those who joined walkouts and marched to advance the civil rights movement.

I thought about who we are, and have always been, in Los Angeles: a city that writes its own history … that comes together to achieve big things.

Over the last six years, I've seen this. I've felt this. And as Mayor, I know this.

While other generations survived economic catastrophe and war, our fight today is right in front of us ... our task is no less clear than it was for those who came before us.

We have to confront the greatest threat to our physical security and our health. This time, not some distant threat overseas ... but one right here — a war on our shores with rising tides, and in our mountains with burning forests. Our fight is to protect nothing less than our families — and our city — from the impacts of climate change.

And we have a fight to end inequality in a country too often defined by haves and have-nots with widening gaps of opportunity ... and we know that begins on a campus like this, with an education system that works for everybody. We can't just say that schools are the great equalizer ... especially when those schools have become places where we warehouse our poverty and trauma.

We cannot abandon our schools and expect teachers, or administrators, or kids themselves to solve our deepest, collective problems. It's up to each and every one of us to step up and to take action.

In L.A., we don't run from a challenge. We rise to it.

And I know we'll do so again ... because I have seen our strength — I have felt our courage — to innovate and to create ... to dream and to do.

My dream, coming into office as your mayor, was to get City Hall back to the basics — to improve city services and drive economic prosperity. And my approach as your mayor has been to never get hung up on the headlines of today or the criticisms of tomorrow ... but to always think about what our city will need 50 years from now.

That approach helped us create a record number of jobs for our city... We cut unemployment in half ... We raised the minimum wage as we reduced our city's business tax ... We cut red tape and opened up our data with support from Controller Ron Galperin ... and we helped more than 260,000 new businesses open their doors.

Here in Los Angeles, we are now the third-largest metropolitan economy in the world, after Tokyo and New York.

But we didn't just reboot our economy, we prepared it for tomorrow ... by building the infrastructure our children and grandchildren deserve:

By passing the largest local transportation initiative in American history, to build 15 rapid transit lines and to pave our streets ...

Working with Public Works Chair Bob Blumenfield, we're making L.A.'s infrastructure the most resilient in America.

This includes investments like the \$14 billion dollar one we're making at LAX, now the 4th busiest airport in the world ...

And because the trip to LAX shouldn't last longer than the one you're about to take, we're bringing you the Plane Train — straight to the terminals ...

[APPLAUSE]

Partnering with Councilmember Joe Buscaino to strengthen the harbor, we're breaking records at our port, the busiest in the Western Hemisphere — even in the midst of a trade war ... and let me thank the working men and women of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union...

Five years ago in my State of the City address, I said we would do the hard work to address rising crime. I'm proud to report that those efforts have paid off:

We've added more than one million patrol hours to L.A.'s streets, compared to 2016 ... and we doubled shelter funding last year to reach more survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking...

We've taken over 14,000 guns off the streets in the last two years alone ... and we've expanded the area served by our award-winning Gang Reduction and Youth Development program by 80%, to reach 6,500 young Angelenos and their families every year ...

The result: We saw a drop in overall crime citywide, including the second-lowest number of homicides in decades ... and the lowest homicide rates ever recorded in South L.A.

[APPLAUSE]

But even one homicide is one too many. So now it's time to go deeper ...

This year, we'll expand our nationally-renowned Community Safety Partnership, which places officers in a neighborhood for five years, so they develop friendships and connections with the people they serve.

Already a runaway success in three neighborhoods, we're partnering with Councilmember Price to bring CSP to South Park ... and we're bringing it to Fernando Gardens in the Valley, alongside our new public safety chair, Councilmember Rodriguez.

And we're going to make sure that our officers spend more time on patrol than on paperwork.

Right now, an officer who makes an arrest in the morning is often out of commission for the rest of the day ... processing that arrest on an old, slow computer.

This year, we'll invest \$14 million dollars in tech upgrades at LAPD, part of a multi-year effort to meet Chief Michel Moore's goal of putting our men and women where they belong: in the communities they've sworn to protect and serve.

And that's just a down payment — because one of L.A.'s most dynamic business leaders, Steve Robinson, will help enlist the private sector in the movement to modernize the technology in our police department.

We're defining Los Angeles through safer streets ... but also doors of opportunity that are open to everybody.

In an era of hashtags like Me Too, Time's Up, Oscars So White — your city government isn't sitting on the sidelines...

We've brought gender equity to our boards and commissions for the first time in city history... and more girls onto our courts and our fields — thanks, in large part, to the vision and leadership of my extraordinary wife and your First Lady, Amy Elaine Wakeland.

We launched a program called Pledge L.A., and over 100 tech companies and capital funders signed on — committing to hire more people of color, and focusing their attention on finding solutions to our city's biggest challenges, from traffic to homelessness.

And through our Evolve Entertainment Fund, we've connected hundreds of young people to mentors and paid internships in our signature film and television industry — 70% of them women, and 98% of them people of color

And by the end of next year, we'll have 1,000 new voices in our entertainment industry ...

When students walked off this campus in 1968, they weren't just standing up for their values ... they stood up for all of our values ... They weren't saying "We should be tolerated" or "We celebrate diversity" ...

They carried American flags high and signs that read "Viva La Raza" ...

They said "We belong." We belong.

To me, that's what distinguishes Los Angeles. It's why we are a city of sanctuary ...

And on that point, I have a message for the president: Immigrants and refugees and asylum seekers are people, not pawns.

In this city, we believe that all people deserve to be treated with dignity.

That's why, this year, we'll create the first-ever Los Angeles Civil and Human Rights Commission with Councilmember Cedillo, the Black Worker Center, and others. This Commission will work to root out — and end — discrimination wherever it exists in our community.

Because in L.A., we don't just say what we stand for ... we make it real.

We don't just raise the minimum wage ... we enforce wage theft.

We don't just say we support immigrants ... we defend them.

And we don't avert our eyes from acts of violence in far-off places like Pittsburgh and New Zealand, or bigotry here at home whether the target is an Armenian school in Canoga Park ... a synagogue in Tarzana ... or a mural in South L.A. We come together as Angelenos, joining hands, to grieve. To heal. And yes, to reaffirm who we are.

Everyone belongs in Los Angeles ... But nobody in Los Angeles belongs on our streets.

Fighting homelessness is not for the faint of heart. This is tough work.

And like you, I'm frustrated with any encampment on any sidewalk in our city. Too many of us still see tents in our neighborhoods ... or a man sleeping on our corner who still hasn't gotten the help he needs.

And I'm impatient ... tired of how long it's taking to make a real dent in this crisis.

But I am not, and we are not, turning away from this — we're pushing forward.

And based on the evidence ... the money that's been invested ... the new hires that have just been made ... the time we've dedicated — I know that things will turn around.

Yes, we can point to the barriers we didn't see coming ...

NIMBYism that's slowed down projects... lawsuits focused more on keeping people's stuff on the streets than how quickly we can move them indoors ... a statewide housing crisis that hasn't gotten any better.

So, yes: Some days I'm frustrated. But I'm passionate about this. There's no issue I work on more deeply than homelessness ... and I can tell you this: we will get there. We will get there.

We know the first three years of a project this expansive are always spent getting the machinery going: hiring people, funding projects, breaking ground.

And it can get worse on the streets while this is happening ...

But I am here to tell you that in this coming year, we will start seeing a difference on our sidewalks and in our communities.

Thanks to our philanthropic partners and the voters who are committed to this fight ...

We have nearly \$5 billion dollars to spend on our work ...

We will see real progress. We're already seeing it:

We see that progress at the Bridge Home site located near El Pueblo, our city's birthplace, where crime and tents are down by more than 60%...

And by this time next year, at least 15 new bridge housing projects connecting people to permanent housing will be open.

I've seen the courage of this Council, and I thank you — folks like Herb Wesson and Mike Bonin ... Mitch O'Farrell and Jose Huizar, who have put everything they've got into standing up bridge housing— even in the face of loud criticism... and I'm grateful to every councilmember who is joining them.

We need housing and shelter in every part of L.A.

This fall, the first HHH project will finally welcome people home into permanent housing ... and we have 107 developments in the pipeline that will open their doors in the coming years ... that's nearly 7,000 new units that our homeless brothers and sisters, and low-income families, deserve.

[APPLAUSE]

Every time I see a tent on the street, that only makes me push harder.

Because even in the face of pain that lingers on our streets, I am optimistic about tomorrow. I know what we're doing is making a difference.

In 2014, we were housing about 8,500 homeless Angelenos a year. In just three years, we doubled that rate, housing nearly 17,000 people in 2017 alone ... that's over 1,400 a month —more than the entire homeless population of Fresno finding housing every 30 days.

In just three years, we doubled the investments in shelter beds across L.A. County ...

And they're opening their doors, supported by more than 800 people who answered the call to join an army that we're assembling to defeat homelessness — outreach workers and mental health professionals ... housing navigators and addiction specialists — they're working harder and faster than ever before to reach our homeless neighbors.

We should be extremely proud of that number: 17,000 people housed in a single year. But as long as the number of people falling into homelessness grows — we're just treading water ... or even losing ground.

Too many parents in this city are moving their families into cars because they're living paycheck to paycheck and can't keep up with the rent.

That's not right.

Now, there are plenty of landlords in this city who are helping us meet this crisis head-on, and I thank them.

Last year, our non-profit partner PATH, People Assisting the Homeless, launched a website called "Lease Up L.A." with Measure H dollars ...

Here's how it works: landlords sign up online and — with support from housing non-profits across L.A. — match their apartments with homeless Angelenos.

But it can take up to four months to help someone find a place. We want to shorten that wait. To help us do that — and to meet our goal of adding 2,000 units to the site in the coming year — I am calling on property owners to sign up to be part of the solution ... and give more Angelenos a place to call home.

While we are focused on bringing folks indoors — it's also time for us to strengthen a safety net that can keep people from becoming homeless in the first place.

Because suffering continues to outpace solutions ...

Too often, Angelenos who live in rent-controlled housing are illegally evicted by landlords looking to raise the rent. And by the time tenants learn their rights, it's too late: they've signed a piece of paper and they're out of their home.

That's why, today, I am announcing a new program to provide free legal representation to low-income Angelenos in danger of losing their homes.

Because it's time to turn the tide against displacement ... it's time to not just react to homelessness on our streets, but to stop it before it starts.

[APPLAUSE]

I see homelessness ... public safety ... equity ... infrastructure ... and so many other issues through the eyes of my 7-year-old daughter, Maya.

What does Los Angeles look like to children in her generation now, as they're growing up? And how will it look when they're grown up, and starting their own families?

That's the lens through which I consider our future ... and try to answer two essential questions to which I would like to dedicate the rest of my address to you today:

One: will young Angelenos receive the education they deserve? And two: are we going to leave them an earth that they can inhabit?

And I know the work that we do today on these two issues — to set our young people up for success and to confront climate change — will eclipse everything else we have done when we look back at this moment.

First, climate change.

We cannot build the Los Angeles our children — and their children — deserve unless we protect the planet that they will inherit.

The students and teachers at Lincoln know this well — because studying the environment is part of the core curriculum here for every young person.

One of them is Emily Tieu [TOO].

Emily is a junior in the Environmental and Social Policy Magnet. When she was a little girl, she was horrified at the sight of a massive fire on the evening news... she thought the world was ending. That day, she told her dad she would be the one to save it.

Well, after what she's achieved on this campus, you'd be a fool to bet against her.

She's already produced a documentary about how people can fight climate change ... she's raised funds to build a greenhouse on this campus ...

And for her capstone project next year, she plans on turning sugar and corn syrup into ethanol ... and using that biofuel to power a light bulb.

Emily isn't the only one in the Lincoln community — or her generation — prepared to do battle with climate change.

She knows, in her words, that — and I quote — there are "a lot of bright minds ready to make a difference ... ready to show us a better way to live."

Emily, you're right. That must be our mission: to make a difference and find a better way to live.

We have to find solutions everywhere, starting in our own backyards.

Because this crisis isn't a distant tragedy.

It's all around us — in the pollution that we inhale, the flames on our hillsides, the floods in our streets.

And it's hitting our pocketbooks too: the regional administrator of FEMA recently told me his agency distributed \$80 billion dollars in taxpayer funds for disaster relief in the last two years — and that was the same amount America spent in the previous 27.

At that pace, climate change may well erase everything we're working on.

Because who cares how many potholes we fill if Venice is underwater?

Will our 911 call times matter if all of our firefighters are off battling flames?

If our city is overwhelmed by climate refugees, do we really think we'll be concerned about reducing library hours or cutting back park programs?

This climate emergency is real, and it's happening everywhere ...

That's why I founded Climate Mayors, now a coalition of 422 cities representing over 70 million Americans ... and why I've been so active in C40, a global network of 94 megacities determined to uphold the Paris Agreement and to pave the way to a zero emissions future.

While the crisis has never been more intense ... the solutions have never been more achievable.

All that's been missing is the will to act with urgency and the scale needed to meet this moment.

It's been exciting for me to hear lawmakers in Washington talk about a Green New Deal ... but I'd say to our leaders in our nation's capital: You don't need to look across the aisle to find solutions — just look across the country, to Los Angeles.

The Green New Deal is built on two main principles: protect our environment and make the economy work for everyone.

And four years ago, we released our Sustainable City pLAn to do just that, to build on the three Es as we call them: the environment, the economy, and equity.

We set out 61 outcomes in 14 categories with hard deadlines — and I'm proud to report that we've met or exceeded 90% of our goals on time or early.

Working with the Council, we integrated the environment into all of our policymaking ... and directed every department to appoint a chief sustainability officer.

I said we would completely wean ourselves off of coal power plants by 2025, and we will...

We've invested in record numbers of renewables ... and I was proud to make the decision to stop the re-powering of three natural gas power plants on our coast, so we'll be not just coal-free, but carbon free.

Together, we made L.A. the number-one solar city in America. And guess what else we did? We created 35,000 green jobs. We reduced our greenhouse gas emissions 11% in a single year, while cutting unemployment by nearly 14% at the same time.

So now we're going to double down on L.A.'s Green New Deal ... and keep working towards our ultimate goal: to become a carbon-neutral city with a thriving middle class.

Let me lay out the vision for us to get there. We will zero out our main sources of harmful emissions: buildings, transportation, electricity, and trash ...

And we will lead with the boldest possible action on every front:

One, we will mandate zero carbon buildings, ensuring that every skyscraper, commercial development, home, and municipal office will be emissions-free by 2050.

Two, we'll build a zero emissions transportation network, putting more charging stations in our neighborhoods ... and giving Angelenos more options to get out of their cars and onto public transit, bikes, scooters, car shares, and buses.

Three, we'll build a zero carbon electricity grid ... reaching 80% clean energy by 2036 ... as we lead our state toward 100% renewables by 2045.

Four, we'll achieve a zero waste future, marking the end of plastic straws, styrofoam, and single-use takeout containers in our city by 2028 ... and by 2050, we won't send a single piece of trash to the landfill.

[APPLAUSE]

And water:

We'll deliver a second Mulholland moment by recycling 100% of our wastewater by 2035. That's like building three L.A. Aqueducts.

Taken together ... when we meet these goals ... we will cut our emissions by 30 percent. That's the equivalent of shutting down 50 coal-fired power plants.

But our goal with the Green New Deal isn't to simply set ambitious policy objectives — it's to implement them. And that requires strong leadership.

So tonight, I'm announcing the establishment of the Los Angeles Climate Emergency Council, to direct our city's efforts. This Council will draw the best ideas from neighborhoods on the front lines of climate change ... harness the expertise of scientists ... and recommend long-term actions to reduce rising temperatures.

With the Climate Emergency Council in place, our Green New Deal will build aggressively on the efforts of my Sustainability team, and the extraordinary leadership of Councilmembers Martinez and Koretz.

We must ensure Los Angeles can survive this challenge.

[PAUSE]

And because our work in addressing climate change has always been about economic justice, we'll make L.A. the green jobs capital of America...

With new training at Trade Tech to teach students how to manage stormwater projects ...

With jobs installing more solar panels and standing up energy-efficient homes and buildings ...

With careers developing new energy technologies ... leading to more prosperity, more savings, and a cleaner, safer planet.

That's why I'm also announcing the formation of a new Jobs Cabinet, led by John Reamer and our Economic and Workforce Development Department. The Jobs Cabinet will bring city, business, education, and labor leaders together to support training programs and create 300,000 good, green jobs in the next 15 years ...

We'll work with Councilmember Harris-Dawson so those middle-class jobs go to Angelenos from the communities of color and low-income neighborhoods that often bear the brunt of climate change ... and we'll work with the Building Trades to ensure we're protecting the livelihoods of our workers...

It's mission critical that our Green New Deal supports everyone — whether it's small business owners who can't afford to keep the air-conditioning running during brutally hot summers ... or people with asthma or cancer living next to an oil well ... and thank you, City Attorney Feuer, for your fight on behalf of those families ...

That means putting those most impacted by this crisis at the front of the line for new solar panels, trees, and cool pavement.

There's no question: this is the fight of our lives. And we're ready for it.

We will release L.A.'s updated Green New Deal later this month. It is a call to arms, and I invite you to join me in this monumental effort.

Because when my grandchildren ask whether I did everything possible to fight climate change, I want to be able to say: Yes, I did ... I want us to be able to say: Yes, we did.

Here in Los Angeles, we believe in a city where every young person, no matter her zip code or family income, can realize her dreams.

But the stark reality is that 8 out of every 10 students in our public schools live in poverty. Eight out of ten.

Let's think about a day in the life of one of those students, a fifth grader:

It's the end of the month and the refrigerator is almost empty — she's hungry, and leaves home for school, where she might get her only meals of the day.

She takes her seat in a class filled with 32 other students. She loves to read, but her school library is closed because there's no librarian. At recess, she plays on broken asphalt because there's no green space on campus ... and if she sprains her wrist, she'll be lucky if she can see the nurse, who's only there one day a week.

After the school bell rings, she goes home to a cramped apartment ... where there's plenty of love, but no quiet place to study. She can't go to an afterschool program, because she needs to look after her younger brother. She might spend a half-hour with her mother, before she heads off to a second job.

And when this student reaches high school, there isn't anyone in her family who's gone to college and knows how to fill out financial aid forms. She doesn't know anyone who can help her find an internship. And the counselor at her school has 500 other students on his caseload, so he's too busy to offer meaningful guidance.

At every step, she finds obstacles, instead of support, to reach her ambitions: to earn good grades ... to take up soccer or debate club ... to go to college and pursue her dream of becoming a nurse.

Today, right now, right here ... we have a chance to change this story.

The teachers strike provided our city with an opportunity to build a new culture of collaboration ...

To stop giving lip service to the idea that our schools should be the center of our neighborhoods ... and to do something about it.

To call time-out on old fights — over charter schools, tenure rules, and which special interest group has more power ... and instead find some common ground.

To stop complaining that our schools are underfunded ... and actually fund them.

And I know that we can get there. Because, no matter our differences, Angelenos share a vision of what our children — all of our children — deserve.

That vision fueled the historic agreement that ended the teachers strike ... but it also ignited a spark that we cannot allow to burn out.

We need to look farther. We need to be bolder.

And we need to understand that all of us are responsible for all the children of our city: Parents and teachers ... support staff and administrators ... the City and County ... the faith community, neighborhood organizations, and the private sector ...

Now is the time for us to harness our unstoppable energy ... and bring the necessary resources and urgency to our movement to build opportunity for everyone...

Now is the time to stop complaining that you can't find the right employees for your business ... or about the expense of incarceration.

Now is the time to fund our schools.

In June, Measure EE will be on our ballots. Now I'm not going to tell you today how to vote, but let me tell you what it will do:

Measure EE will help us lower class sizes ... so when any student raises a hand and doesn't understand a concept, they aren't left behind.

Measure EE will make sure our school libraries are open and staffed by a teacher librarian ... because schools are our city's literacy programs.

Measure EE will put a nurse on campus — not just one day a week, but every day ... because kids don't schedule when they'll be sick or injured.

Measure EE will also provide funds to help build what we all know a good school looks like:

That includes counselors that our high school students can see and get to know ...

We have students who have seen loved ones shot in front of their eyes ... who have grown up in the foster care system or with domestic violence in their homes. Their trauma goes untreated every day... or they have to get in line behind hundreds of other students to see a counselor.

Measure EE will cut counselors' caseloads so they can give more attention to the young people who are counting on us.

And Measure EE will help create resources for more supportive services for families ... and add more after-school programming and technology to our schools, from computers to robotics.

Now I understand the criticism from folks who say this district has not achieved enough reform. And, in many regards, I agree with you — there is always more work to do...

But I want to acknowledge a district that has graduation rates on the rise A district that slashed the number of days lost to student suspension by 90 percent.

There will always be those who claim that funding our schools is a waste of money.

But our children are not a waste of money.

So yes, there is always more work to be done ... but this is a district that — with your help — I believe can go the distance. It built 131 new schools in two decades with the support of L.A. voters, so more students could learn in their own neighborhoods.

But new classrooms can't change students' lives when they're filled with too many kids.

And I want to be clear: I will continue to do my part to ensure LAUSD is held accountable: for managing their dollars ... pushing through reforms ... and empowering communities to run their local schools.

But we must move forward.

The alternative is to starve our schools of funding ... to allow teacher and staff layoffs ... to do nothing to address larger class sizes — and to me, and it should be for you, that is unacceptable.

We cannot wait.

And I say this to our District, and the people of Los Angeles: I will stay committed to this fight for the rest of the time that I am your mayor.

And together with mayors from southeast cities, we believe in this district because we believe in our schools ... we believe in our teachers ... we believe in all of our support staff ... And most of all, we believe in the hopes and dreams of this city's young people — the students who are LAUSD.

But Measure EE is not happening in a vacuum.

You see, it's part of our larger vision for L.A.'s schools, which starts in the first days of a student's journey and carries them through to a diploma and a career ... and it involves all of us.

Less than half of children from low-income families in America are ready for school at age 5. Less than half.

And we know that most brain growth takes place in the first years of life, when young children learn new words, and develop social and problem-solving skills.

Our failure then costs us for the rest of their lives.

Early childhood education is critical to learning, and its benefits reach far beyond kindergarten — to better outcomes in school and higher graduation rates.

Early childhood education can't be a luxury only for those who can afford it ... the stakes are too high.

I want to thank Governor Newsom for accounting for the needs of our youngest learners in his budget, by including dollars to expand early learning facilities ... to train early childhood educators ... and to add seats for kids across the state.

These are investments in California's future. And let me tell you: L.A. is ready for this investment. And we will focus these state resources to make sure that every child — especially children living in the highest concentrations of poverty — are ready to learn when they enter kindergarten.

Working with the District, the County Office of Education, and First 5 L.A., we will wipe out the school readiness gap for our most vulnerable children in Los Angeles.

And I want to thank our County Supervisors and everyone who's part of this effort.

To get there, we'll focus on building a workforce to teach and inspire our youngest students.

I'm setting a new goal tonight: to recruit, train, and certify 2,500 new early childhood educators by 2025 ...

I know we can count on Councilmember Krekorian, a longtime leader in this effort, as well as partners from our adult schools, community colleges, and the California State University system.

To nurture the next generation of early childhood educators, we'll support our College Promise students who are in community college and who have a dream to teach, but don't know how to make it real ... New Angelenos who came to this country with teaching skills and experience, but still need to be certified here ... Experts in our communities who have been caring for children for generations, but have lacked access to the latest training and resources.

That's how we'll develop a highly trained workforce to meet the needs of every child here in L.A. and set them up for success in school.

And then, when our kids take off from that launch pad, we'll greet them on the first day of Kindergarten with a library card — which opens up a universe of learning and discovery, as it did for me after school at the Sherman Oaks Public Library...

We won't just give them a library card, though — together with Councilmember Ryu, we'll work to create a higher education savings account program for LAUSD students.

And to make sure kids keep learning over the summer, we'll build on our expansion of L.A.'s Best summer learning. Last fall, 7,200 students returned to their classrooms ready for success because of this program.

By next summer, L.A.'s Best will offer summer learning in our two Promise Zones — adding another 1,200 students to this program.

You see, our vision puts schools at the center of their communities ...

So far, my Administration has worked with the district to create four Community School Parks at elementary schools across L.A. — by keeping those schools open on weekends to provide 45,000 Angelenos who live in neighborhoods that don't have parks with a place to play and take art, dance, and exercise classes ... all within walking distance of home.

Tonight, I'm setting a new goal to open 25 additional Community School Parks in elementary schools by 2025. Because every student and her family deserves a place to play after the bell rings, on weekends, and over the summer.

Then, in middle school, we have to plant the seed of higher education.

Last year, we helped bring nearly \$78 million dollars to more than 14,000 L.A. students for tutoring and college and career counseling, starting in the 6th grade and continuing until graduation day...

We've opened College Corners in every one of our 16 FamilySource Centers, to help parents and students fill out financial aid forms and apply for college ...

And Los Angeles: we made history when we came together to make community college free ... and I am so proud to report that we have boosted full-time community college enrollment of LAUSD graduates by 56% in just two years — that is a breathtaking number.

This past year, more than 5,000 Angelenos became College Promise students.

[APPLAUSE]

This is a program that does much more than cover tuition. It connects students with jobs, internships, travel abroad experiences like the ones we offered to Egypt, Japan, and Mexico with the support of our extraordinary Consular Corps ...

Recently, I met with a few of these students and they told me how these opportunities were life-changing ... but they also said they still struggled to afford a computer or pay for transportation to and from school. One student told me he had to read his textbooks in a series of screenshots on his phone.

Starting next school year, every L.A. College Promise student will have free rides on our DASH buses ... and, thanks to the Annenberg Foundation, I'm proud to announce that each one of them will have a laptop they can take home at night.

And College Promise is growing — because today I am announcing that we will double the program to 10,000 students per year by 2022 ...

[APPLAUSE]

This is about opening the door to a bright future for every graduate.

It's the same reason we will quadruple the number of youth jobs in Los Angeles from when I took office — to give 20,000 young Angelenos a shot to learn about a workplace, to find a mentor, and to explore a potential career.

And we're equipping young people with a web platform called "Find Your Future," connecting them to work that lines up with their skills and interests — so they can earn and learn.

Los Angeles: This is our moment.

Over 28% of children in L.A. County live in poverty, and they are concentrated in our public schools — so let's fix that.

Employers — those who want to bring world-class talent to our city, or find it here, you need good public schools — let's make that happen.

I want to thank those who joined us in getting Measure EE on the ballot... and I want our business owners — every company, large and small — to consider how a better education system will build a better workforce ... and a better bottom line ... in the long run.

Let's come together, for our children, and let's turn out to vote in June.

Because if we do, we'll know that this was the moment we transformed L.A.'s future ... the moment we re-built our middle class ... the moment we strengthened our foundation for the city that our children and our grandchildren will inherit.

Sitting in a high school history class, flipping the pages of a textbook, progress almost seems easy.

On page 72, slavery ends ... on page 95, women get the right to vote ... then there are the East L.A. walkouts here at Lincoln on page 115 ... suddenly, if you turn to page 128, there's marriage equality.

Moving through those pages, sometimes we forget — and we don't feel — how hard-won that progress was ... the long negotiations ... the compromises forged ... the lives lost ... the gains erased ... and the breakthroughs that finally changed the course of history.

Our future achievements won't come easy — ending homelessness, reducing traffic, building great schools, and saving our city from climate change. But what great challenge has ever come without hard work?

You see, a big part of L.A.'s history is how we come together to write our story.

Etched above the windows in this room are reminders of our roots ... literal windows into our city's past:

1781: Pueblo La Reina de Los Angeles founded.

1847: Los Angeles joins the United States of America.

1850: California is admitted to the Union.

1913: This high school opens its doors.

What will we see through tomorrow's windows?

My job as your Mayor is clear: to fight for each and every one of you, and to deliver a back-to-basics agenda that works ... to run a city that never shuts down, where you can always count on your 911 call being answered ... a city where everyone can share in the wealth that we create ... a city where every neighborhood school is empowered to educate the leaders of today and tomorrow.

Together, we deliver the destiny that has made the City of Angels one of the great capitals of the world — built, powered, and propelled forward by our labor, and by our dreams ... by people who come from every part of the globe and the country to make this place their home.

One day, the bold hopes we're fighting for will be etched above the windows of some school yet to be built...

2028: Angelenos end street homelessness ... and welcome the world to the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

2035: A College Promise graduate, maybe even Emily or one of her classmates in Ms. Kwan's senior seminar here at Lincoln, wins the Nobel Prize.

2045: Los Angeles becomes the first big city on the planet to eliminate carbon emissions.

We have the power to make these milestones happen — and the stakes have never been higher.

So today, as we leave this room, we fight for the future of our planet and our progeny ... the future of our communities and our children.

We have a choice in June at the ballot box on education. And we have a choice every day — when we turn the ignition, or turn on the tap — to consider what it means to live sustainably.

So what choice will we make? Will we be the generation that fell short because we lacked the courage and foresight to keep our oceans from rising ... and our crops from dying?

Will we be the generation that put profits ahead of people ... and whose students suffered while our schools were short-changed?

Trust me: lost in the history books are the people who said “no” — who said we could never bring water to Los Angeles because it was too expensive ... who said we could never defeat the Axis powers and should just mind our business ... who said we could never fly faster than the speed of sound, slip the bonds of gravity, and traverse the cosmos.

We cannot wait for the pen to be passed to us to write the next chapter of L.A. history. Tonight, we hold that pen in our hands ... as we write the future of an even stronger city.

And I invite you — all of you — to be the authors of this next chapter ... where we guarantee every one of our children a quality education ... where we ensure the world that they inherit is not choked by pollution.

My grandfather Salvador — an immigrant from Mexico and a dreamer who earned his citizenship after fighting for our freedom in World War II — was part of what we call “the greatest generation.”

What will future generations call us?

I believe that when they are asked what we did to meet the challenges of our age, they will answer: the generation that secured our future.

Because, in Los Angeles, we don't just promise greatness. We act, together, to achieve it.

And we will. And in doing so, we will make the state of our great city stronger than ever before.

Thank you. God bless Los Angeles. And God bless all of you.

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